

Drug Use in Ireland and Northern Ireland

2002/2003 Drug Prevalence Survey: Cannabis Results

Bulletin 3

Previously published findings in *Drug Use in Ireland and Northern Ireland: First Results (Revised) from the 2002/2003 Drug Prevalence Survey (Bulletin 1)* showed that cannabis was the most commonly used illegal drug in both Ireland and Northern Ireland across all time periods, lifetime (ever used), last year (recent use) and last month (current use).

This bulletin contains results relating to cannabis prevalence on a lifetime (ever used), last year (recent use), and last month (current use) in Ireland and Northern Ireland. It also examines age of first use; regular use; type of cannabis used; method by which cannabis is used; how and where cannabis is obtained; reasons for stopping use; attitudes to cannabis use and perceptions of risk, together with the most common characteristics of typical cannabis users.

IRELAND – Key Findings

- Prevalence rates were higher among younger respondents – the lifetime prevalence rate for those aged 15 to 34 (24%) was more than double that for those aged 35 to 64 (11%).
- Male respondents reported higher prevalence rates than females across all time periods. The lifetime prevalence figure for males was 22% compared to 12% for females.
- The average age that respondents reported that they had first used cannabis was 18 years for both males and females. The average age of first regular use was 18 for males and 17 for females.
- Almost a quarter (22%) of current users have used cannabis on a daily or almost daily basis.
- Hash was the most commonly used form of cannabis – used by 68% of current users.
- The majority of current users (98%) consume cannabis using a joint.
- Nearly one third of recent users (31%) were given cannabis by a family member or friend, a further 27% said they had shared cannabis amongst a group of friends.
- The vast majority of respondents (79%) considered it 'very easy' or 'fairly easy' to obtain cannabis within a 24 hour period.
- Over a quarter (27%) of respondents who said that they had ever taken cannabis said that they had used it regularly. Of these, almost three in five (58%) said that they had stopped taking cannabis, one in eight (12%) said

that they had tried to stop and failed, whilst three in ten (30%) respondents said that they had never tried to stop.

- A large majority (72%) of those surveyed felt that cannabis use should be permitted for medical purposes.
- Only 21% of respondents agreed that cannabis use should be permitted for recreational purposes. Thirteen percent of those who had never used cannabis agreed that recreational use should be permitted, compared to 61% of those who had ever used the drug.

NORTHERN IRELAND – Key Findings

- Prevalence rates were higher among younger respondents – the lifetime prevalence for those aged 15 to 34 (25%) was more than double that for those aged 35 to 64 (10%).
- Male respondents reported higher prevalence rates than females across all time periods. The lifetime prevalence figure for males was 23% compared to 11% for females.
- The average age that respondents reported that they had first used cannabis was 18 years – females were slightly older at 19 years compared to males at 18 years. The average age of first regular use was also reported as 18 years old.
- Almost a third (31%) of current users said that they used cannabis on a daily or almost daily basis.
- Resin was the most commonly used form of cannabis – used by almost half (47%) of current users.
- The majority of current users (91%) consume cannabis in the form of a joint.
- Two in five (39%) said that they shared cannabis among a group of friends, a further 23% bought it from a friend.
- Over half (55%) of recent users said they had obtained cannabis at the house of a friend, whilst 12% had obtained it in the street or park and 14% at a disco/club/bar.
- The vast majority (91%) of respondents considered it 'very easy' or 'fairly easy' to obtain cannabis within a 24 hour period.
- Over a quarter (28%) of respondents who said that they had ever taken cannabis said that they had used it regularly. Of these, almost half (48%) said that they had stopped taking cannabis, one in five (20%) said that they had tried to stop and failed, whilst a third (33%) said that they had never tried to stop.
- Over two in five (42%) of regular users who stopped using cannabis said they stopped because they did not want to take it any more. More than a quarter (26%) cited health concerns as their reason for stopping using cannabis, whilst a quarter (25%) said they stopped because cannabis was no longer part of their social life.
- Almost all (94%) of those who had ever used cannabis compared to three quarters (76%) of those who had never used cannabis, felt that cannabis use should be permitted for medical reasons.
- Two in three (63%) of those who had ever used cannabis compared to one in seven (14%) of those who had never used cannabis, felt that cannabis use should be permitted for recreational reasons.

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Introduction

The survey was commissioned by the National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NACD) in Ireland and the Drug and Alcohol Information and Research Unit (DAIRU) within the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) in Northern Ireland.

The main focus of the survey was to obtain prevalence rates for key illegal drugs, such as cannabis, ecstasy, cocaine, and heroin, on a lifetime (ever used), last year (recent use), and last month (current use) basis. Similar prevalence questions were also asked of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs (e.g. tranquillisers); attitudinal and demographic information was also sought from respondents.

Following open tender, the contract for conducting the survey was awarded to MORI MRC.

Methodology

The questionnaire and methodology for this survey were based on best practice guidelines drawn up by the EMCDDA. The questionnaires were administered through face-to-face interviews with respondents aged between 15 and 64 years and who are normally resident in households in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Thus persons outside these age ranges, or who do not normally live in private households, have not been included in the survey. This approach is commonly used throughout the EU and because of the exclusion of those living in institutions (for example prisons, nursing homes etc.) this type of prevalence survey is usually known as a **general population survey**.

Fieldwork for the survey was carried out between October 2002 and April 2003 and the final achieved sample comprised of 8,434 respondents (4,918 in Ireland and 3,516 in Northern Ireland). The response rate for the survey was 70% in Ireland and 63% in Northern Ireland.

The sample was weighted by gender, age, Health Board¹ in Ireland and Health and Social Services Board area in Northern Ireland, to maximise its representativeness of the general population.

Details of the methodology have been summarised in a paper published on the websites of the NACD (<http://www.nacd.ie/>) and the DHSSPS (<http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/>) and a comprehensive technical report containing copies of the questionnaires used in both jurisdictions will be published separately.

What is Prevalence?

The term **prevalence** refers to the proportion of a population who have used a drug over a particular time period. In general population surveys, prevalence is measured by asking respondents in a representative sample drawn from the population to recall their use of drugs. The three most widely used recall periods are: lifetime (ever used a drug), last year (used a drug in the last twelve months), and last month (used a drug in the last 30 days). Provided that a sample is representative of the total population, prevalence information obtained from a sample can be used to infer prevalence in the population.

Lifetime prevalence refers to the proportion of the sample that reported ever having used the named drug at the time they were surveyed. A person who records lifetime prevalence may or may not be currently using the drug. Lifetime prevalence should not be interpreted as meaning that people have necessarily used a drug over a long period of time or that they will use the drug in future.

Last year prevalence refers to the proportion of the sample that reported using a named drug in the year prior to the survey. For this reason, last year prevalence is often referred to as **recent use**.

Last month prevalence refers to the proportion of the sample that reported using a named drug in the 30 day period prior to the survey. Last month prevalence is often referred to as **current use**. A proportion of those reporting current use may be occasional (or first-time) users who happen to have used in the period leading up to the survey – it should therefore be appreciated that current use is not synonymous with regular use.

¹ Since January 2005 the Health Boards in Ireland have undergone restructuring and are merged under one authority – the Health Service Executive. The above reference relates to the Health Board structure detailed in *Bulletin 2: Drug Use in Ireland and Northern Ireland 2002/2003 Drug Prevalence Survey: Health Board (Ireland) & Health and Social Services Board (Northern Ireland) Results (Revised)*.

Understanding the Results of this Bulletin

Initial results from the Drug Prevalence Survey were published in Bulletin 1 (October 2003, revised June 2005), which gave lifetime, last year, and last month prevalence rates for key drugs for the Island of Ireland, Ireland and Northern Ireland. Bulletin 2, published in March 2004 (revised June 2005), contained comparable information for Ireland and its constituent Health Boards and Northern Ireland and its constituent Health and Social Services Board areas. Prevalence rates for alcohol and tobacco (and, relating to Northern Ireland only, for anabolic steroids and Nubain®) were also included in the tables.

This bulletin (*Bulletin 3*) contains prevalence rates for the use of cannabis and other information relating to cannabis use in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Results are given for all respondents aged between 15 and 64, by gender and by age (younger adults aged 15 to 34 and older adults aged 35 to 64).

Readers should note that the total sample size for each group is given at the head of each column. As in all sample surveys, the greater the sample size the more statistically reliable the results become.

Invalid responses have been excluded from all analyses. Percentages may not always sum to 100 due to either the effect of rounding or where respondents could give more than one answer.

Statistical significance tests (Chi-Square Tests) have been carried out on a range of variables. These tests are used to establish the degree of confidence with which we can infer that the observed findings are an accurate reflection of the views of the population. In this bulletin, where test results have emerged as statistically significant, this has been reported at the 5% level of probability ($p \leq 0.05$). Therefore, where a value of p less than or equal to 0.05 was found, we can be confident that 95 times out of 100 the differences that we have observed are real, i.e. not due to sampling error.

In an attempt to compare prevalence rates for cannabis use across different social grades/socio-economic groups, the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC2000) was used. The SOC2000 is based on the employment status, level of responsibility and qualifications, of the chief income earner within a household. Further information will be available in a technical report which will be published separately.

Respondents were then coded into the following social grades:

- A** (Professionals, senior management and top civil servants)
- B** (Middle management, senior civil servants, managers and owners of businesses)
- C1** (Junior management and owners of small businesses)
- C2** (Skilled manual workers and manual workers responsible for other workers)
- D** (Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers, trainees and apprentices)
- E** (All those dependant on the State long-term)

Future Publications

This is the third bulletin in a series that explores findings from the drug prevalence survey 2002/2003. Future bulletins will include an analysis of polydrug use, use of psycho-stimulants and an exploration of the socio-demographic profile of drug users throughout the Island of Ireland. A detailed technical report, including copies of the questionnaires used, will also be published.

Glossary

Bong

A water pipe through which the hot smoke is cooled down before being inhaled.

Grass/Weed

Slang terms for herbal cannabis.

Hash, Hashish

Cannabis resin

Hash Oil

A purified and concentrated form of resin or herbal cannabis.

Herb

The fresh or (more commonly) dried leaves and flowering tops of the plant.

Joint

A cannabis cigarette (also known as a spliff, reefer etc.)

Resin

Produced by separating the resinous parts of the plant from the leaves etc.

Skunk

A type of high-potency cannabis.

Ireland

Prevalence of Cannabis Use (Table 1)

Almost one in six respondents (17%) aged 15 to 64 reported that they had taken cannabis at some stage in their lives, with 5% having used in the last year and 3% having used in the last month.

Age (Table 1)

Overall, prevalence rates were higher among younger respondents – the lifetime prevalence rate for those aged 15 to 34 (24%) was more than double the rate for those aged 35 to 64 (11%). The last year prevalence rate for those aged 15 to 34 (9%) was more than 4 times that for respondents aged 35 to 64 (2%). Similarly, the rate for last month use was 4 times higher for those aged 15 to 34 (4%) than for those aged 35 to 64 (1%).

Gender (Table 1)

Male respondents reported higher prevalence rates than females across all time periods. The lifetime prevalence figure for males was 22% compared to 12% for females. Similarly, the figures for last year were males 7% and females 3%, whilst last month prevalence rates were males 3% and females 2%.

First use (Table 2)

The average age that respondents reported that they had first used cannabis was 18 years – this was true for both males and females. Younger respondents aged 15 to 34 reported a lower average age of first use of 17 years whilst older respondents reported an average age of first use of 20 years.

First regular use (Table 2)

The average age of first regular use was 18 years for males and 17 years for females. Younger respondents aged 15 to 34 reported first using regularly at 17 years while the corresponding figure for older respondents in the 35 to 64 age-group was 19 years.

The period of time between first using cannabis and becoming a regular user was two years in all instances.

Frequency of use (Table 3)

Frequency of use for all respondents decreased over each time period with lifetime prevalence (Table 1) at 17%, (less than 1 in 6) and last month prevalence at 3% (1 in 33). However, 1% of respondents aged 35 to 64 who have ever used cannabis, have used in the last month, compared to 4% of those aged 15 to 34 (Table 1).

More than two in five (41%) current users use cannabis less than once per week, one in five (22%) use cannabis at least once per week whilst 14% use cannabis several times per week.

Almost a quarter (22%) of current users have used cannabis on a daily or almost daily basis. However, when broken down by gender, more than a quarter of males (27%) compared to one in ten females (11%) reported using cannabis on a daily or almost daily basis.

Of the current cannabis users almost a quarter of younger respondents (23%) compared to one in five (21%) of older respondents reported taking cannabis on a daily or almost daily basis.

Type of cannabis used (Table 4)

Hash was the most commonly used form of cannabis – used by the majority (68%) of current users aged 15 to 64 – this was also true for both males (68%) and females (67%). Both younger respondents (71%) and older respondents (57%) also said that they most commonly used hash.

Method by which cannabis is used (Table 5)

The majority of current users (98%) consume cannabis using a joint. A higher proportion of male respondents (99%) than females (96%) reported using a joint whilst a higher proportion of females (5%) than males (3%) reported eating cannabis. Older adults (35 to 64) are less likely than younger adults (15 to 34) to use a pipe to take cannabis (4% compared to 7% respectively) or a bong (4% and 6% respectively).

How cannabis was obtained (Table 6)

All respondents who said they had used cannabis in the last twelve months were asked how they had obtained their drugs on the last occasion. One third of respondents (31%) were given cannabis by a family member or friend, a further 27% said they had shared cannabis amongst a group of friends. A small number of people, 1%, reported buying cannabis from a stranger.

A third of females (33%) compared to a quarter of males (24%) reported sharing cannabis amongst friends, while almost a quarter of males (24%) compared to 11% of females bought cannabis from a friend. Four percent of females used cannabis that had been given to them by a stranger compared with 3% of males.

One in three younger respondents (30%) compared to one in eight (15%) of older respondents shared cannabis amongst friends. Thirty two percent of older adults, compared with 17% of young adults, bought cannabis from a friend. Eighteen percent of older respondents, compared to 16% of younger respondents, bought cannabis from a contact not known to them personally.

Where cannabis was obtained (Table 7)

Respondents who had recently taken cannabis were asked where they had obtained it on the last occasion that they had used it. Almost three in five respondents (57%) said they had obtained cannabis at the house of a friend, whilst 20% had obtained it at a disco/club/bar and 13% said that they had obtained cannabis in the street or park.

Almost one in six male respondents (17%) compared to 4% of female respondents obtained cannabis in the street or park. 7% of older respondents and 8% of younger respondents obtained cannabis by ordering it by telephone whilst 9% of younger respondents obtained cannabis from the house of a dealer. No respondents from the older age group reported obtaining cannabis in this way.

Ease of obtaining cannabis (Table 8)

The vast majority of respondents (79%) considered it 'very easy' or 'fairly easy' to obtain cannabis within a 24 hour period. This was true for both male (82%) and female (71%) respondents and for both younger and older respondents (79%).

Stopping cannabis use and reasons for stopping (Tables 9 & 10)

Over a quarter (27%) of respondents who said that they had ever taken cannabis said that they had used it regularly.

Of these, almost three in five (58%) said that they had stopped taking cannabis, one in eight (12%) said that they had tried to stop and failed, whilst three in ten respondents (30%) said that they had never tried to stop.

Half of female respondents (52%) compared to three in five male respondents (60%) said that they had stopped taking cannabis, whilst three in ten (29%) males and a third of females (34%) said that they had never tried to stop. More women (14%) than men (11%) had tried to stop taking cannabis but failed.

Two thirds of older respondents (67%) compared to more than half (55%) of younger respondents said that they had stopped taking cannabis, whilst a quarter (25%) of older respondents stated that they had never tried to stop compared to almost a third (32%) of younger respondents.

Of those regular users who stopped using cannabis, around four in ten (43%) said that it was because they did not want to take it anymore. A quarter (26%) said they stopped because cannabis was no longer part of their social life, almost a quarter (23%) stopped because they did not enjoy the after effects, whilst one in five (20%) said that they stopped using cannabis for health reasons.

One in ten (10%) males said they stopped using cannabis due to the impact on their job/friends and family, whilst one in five females (20%) stopped taking cannabis due to pregnancy.

One in ten younger respondents (10%) compared to 3% of older respondents said they stopped due to cost whilst one in seven (14%) older respondents said they stopped due to a less available supply compared to only 1% of younger respondents.

Attitudes towards cannabis use (Table 11)

All those surveyed who had heard of cannabis were asked about their attitudes regarding cannabis use. The attitudes of this group were then compared with the attitudes of two mutually exclusive groups – those who said that they had used cannabis at some stage in their lives and those who said that they had never used cannabis.

In general, those who had ever used cannabis had more liberal views to the use of cannabis for both medical and recreational use and they felt that there was less risk to those who smoked cannabis on a regular basis.

A large majority (72%) of those surveyed felt that cannabis use should be permitted for medical reasons. Almost all (91%) of those who had ever used cannabis compared to seven in ten (69%) of those who had never used cannabis, felt that cannabis use should be permitted for medical reasons. For both groups, males (93% and 72% respectively) were more likely to agree than females (89% and 66% respectively) and older respondents (96% and 70% respectively) were more likely to agree than younger respondents (89% and 67% respectively).

In contrast, only 21% of respondents agreed that cannabis use should be permitted for recreational purposes. Thirteen percent of those who had never used cannabis agreed that recreational use should be permitted, compared to 61% of those who had ever used the drug. For both groups, males (15% and 66% respectively) were more likely to agree to its recreational use than females (11% and 53% respectively).

Respondents were also asked to rate their level of disapproval to the occasional use of cannabis – over three quarters (79%) of respondents who had never used cannabis compared to less than a quarter (23%) of those who had ever used cannabis, disapproved of people smoking cannabis occasionally. For both groups, females (80% and 29% respectively) were more likely to disapprove than males (77% and 20% respectively).

Risk perception (Table 11)

When asked about the risk involved in the use of drugs, two in three (64%) respondents who had never used cannabis compared to a quarter (25%) of respondents who had ever used cannabis, felt that there was a great risk in smoking cannabis regularly.

Males and females who had never used cannabis were more than twice as likely (59% and 68% respectively) as males and females who have ever used cannabis (23% and 27% respectively) to perceive cannabis use as a 'great risk'. In general males were less likely to perceive cannabis use as a 'great risk' than females.

Both younger respondents (56%) and older respondents (70%) who had never used cannabis felt that there was a 'great risk' from regular cannabis use compared to the corresponding respondents (23% and 27% respectively) who had ever used cannabis.

Profile of cannabis users

Gender (Table 12)

The results of all three chi-square tests were statistically significant. This indicates that there is an association between gender and cannabis use. Males are more likely than females to have ever used cannabis, used it in the last twelve months and used it in the last month.

Age (Table 13)

The results of all three chi-square tests were statistically significant. This indicates that there is an association between age and cannabis use. Younger respondents (15-34) report

more cannabis use than older respondents (35-64) across all three prevalence categories.

Socio-Economic Group² (Table 14)

The results of two of the three chi-square tests were statistically significant. This indicates that there is an association between socio-economic group (SEG) and cannabis use for both lifetime and last month use. Respondents from SEG C1 (Junior management and owners of small businesses) had higher lifetime and last month prevalence rates than expected whereas respondents from SEG C2 (Skilled manual workers and manual workers responsible for other workers) and SEG D (Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers, trainees and apprentices) had lower lifetime prevalence rates than expected.

Work status (Table 15)

The results of all three chi-square tests were statistically significant. This indicates that there is an association between work status and cannabis use. Respondents who were in paid work had higher lifetime prevalence rates than expected whereas respondents that were not in paid work had a lower lifetime and last year prevalence rate than expected. Students had higher last year and last month prevalence rates than expected.

Housing tenure (Table 16)

The results of the three chi-square tests were statistically significant. This indicates that there is an association between housing tenure and cannabis use. Respondents who rented their property from a private landlord and from a Local Authority/Housing Association had higher than expected prevalence rates for lifetime, last year and last month prevalence rates, whereas respondents who owned their home had lower prevalence rates than expected.

Age education ceased (Table 17)

The result of one of the chi-square tests was statistically significant. This indicates that there is an association between lifetime prevalence rates and age education ceased, but not between recent or current use and age education ceased. Respondents who left education aged 20 years or older had higher prevalence rates than expected whereas respondents who had left education as teenagers had lower prevalence rates than expected.

Education level (Table 18)

The results of two of the chi-square tests were statistically significant. This indicates that there is an association between lifetime and recent prevalence rates and education level attained; with those who have a third level education having higher than expected prevalence rates.

2 See classification of Socio-Economic Groups on page 4.

Northern Ireland

Prevalence of cannabis use (Table 19)

Almost one in six respondents (17%) aged 15 to 64 reported that they had taken cannabis at some time in their lives, with 5% having used in the last year and 3% having used in the last month.

Age (Table 19)

Overall, prevalence rates were higher among younger respondents – the lifetime prevalence for those aged 15 to 34, at 25%, was more than double the rate for those aged 35 to 64 (10%). The last year prevalence rate for those aged 15 to 34, at 10%, was 5 times that for those aged 35 to 64 (2%). Similarly, the rate for last month use was 5 times higher for those aged 15 to 34 (5%) than for those aged 35 to 64 (1%).

Gender (Table 19)

Male respondents reported higher prevalence rates than females across all time periods. The lifetime prevalence figure for males was 23% compared to 11% for females. Similarly, the figures for last year prevalence rates were males 9% and females 2% whilst last month prevalence rates were males 5% and females 1%.

First use (Table 20)

The average age respondents reported that they had first used cannabis was 18 years. Females were slightly older at 19 years compared to males at 18 years. Younger respondents aged 15 to 34 reported a lower average age of first use at 17 years whilst older respondents reported an average age of first use of 21 years.

First regular use (Table 20)

The average age of first regular use was reported as 18 years old – this was the same for males, but was 19 for females. As with age of first use, younger respondents aged 15 to 34 reported an average age of first regular use of 18 years, compared to an average age of 23 years for those aged 35 and over.

The period of time between first using cannabis and becoming a regular user was 2 years across all groups except females where the lag was 1 year.

Frequency of use (Table 21)

Frequency of use for all respondents decreased over time with lifetime prevalence (Table 19) at 17% and last month prevalence at 3%. One percent of those aged 35 to 64 who have ever used cannabis, have used in the last month, compared to 5% of those aged 15 to 34.

Over a quarter (28%) of current users use cannabis less than once a week whilst one in five (21%) use cannabis at least once a week.

Almost a third (31%) said that they used cannabis on a daily or almost daily basis. However, when broken down by gender, a third of males (33%) compared to one in six females (16%) reported using cannabis on a daily or almost daily basis.

Three in ten (30%) younger respondents who are current users, compared to a third (34%) of older respondents who are current users, reported taking cannabis on a daily or almost daily basis.

Type of cannabis used (Table 22)

Resin was the most commonly used form of cannabis – it was the type selected by almost half (47%) of current users aged 15 to 64. Resin was also the most common type used by males (50%) whilst grass was the most common type used by females (29%).

Whilst resin was the most common type used by both younger and older respondents, one in eight (13%) younger respondents used weed.

Method by which cannabis is used (Table 23)

The majority of current users (91%) consume cannabis in the form of a joint. This was true for both male (91%) and female (93%) respondents and for younger (90%) and older (95%) respondents.

How cannabis was obtained (Table 24)

All respondents who said they had used cannabis in the last twelve months were asked how they had obtained their drugs on the last occasion. Two in five (39%) said that they shared cannabis among a group of friends, a further 23% bought it from a friend.

Two in five males (41%) compared to a third of females (33%) shared cannabis among friends. One in ten females (10%) compared to 3% of males used cannabis that had been given to them by a stranger.

Two in five older respondents (42%) said that they shared cannabis among a group of friends. The figure was slightly lower for younger respondents (39%). Six percent of younger respondents had used cannabis given to them by a stranger.

Where cannabis was obtained (Table 25)

Respondents who had recently taken cannabis were asked where they had obtained the drug. Over half (55%) said they had obtained cannabis at the house of a friend, whilst 12% had obtained it in the street or park and 14% at a disco/club/bar.

Almost one in six female respondents (16%) compared to one in seven male respondents (14%) obtained cannabis in a disco/bar/pub. Male respondents (14%) were more likely than female respondents (7%) to obtain cannabis in a street/park. One in twelve males (8%) said that they obtained cannabis by ordering it by telephone.

Nearly two-thirds of older respondents (63%) compared to half (53%) of younger respondents said that they had obtained cannabis at a friend's house. Almost one in seventeen younger respondents (6%) obtained cannabis at the house of a dealer.

Ease of obtaining cannabis (Table 26)

The vast majority (91%) of respondents considered it 'very easy' or 'fairly easy' to obtain cannabis within a 24 hour period. This was true for both male (92%) and female (86%) respondents and for both younger (91%) and older (90%) respondents.

Stopping cannabis use and reasons for stopping (Tables 27 & 28)

Over a quarter (28%) of respondents who said that they had ever taken cannabis said that they had used it regularly. Of these, almost half (48%) said that they had stopped taking cannabis, one in five (20%) said that they had tried to stop and failed, whilst a third (33%) said that they had never tried to stop.

Three in five female respondents (61%) compared to two in five male respondents (45%) said that they had stopped taking cannabis, whilst a third of males (33%) and three in ten (29%) females said that they had never tried to stop.

Almost three in five older respondents (57%) compared to more than two in five younger respondents (46%) said that they had stopped taking cannabis, whilst around a third of respondents from both age groups (33% and 32% respectively) said that they had never tried to stop.

Two in five regular users (42%) who stopped using cannabis said they stopped because they did not want to take it any more. More than a quarter (26%) cited health concerns as their reason for stopping using cannabis, whilst a quarter of respondents (25%) said they stopped because cannabis was no longer part of their social life. One in five (20%) said they stopped because they did not enjoy the after effects.

Almost half of males (45%) compared to almost a third of females (30%) who stopped taking cannabis said they did not want to take it any more. A third of females (30%) compared to one in six males (17%) said they did not enjoy the after effects, whilst 19% of women stopped taking cannabis due to pregnancy. One in eight males (12%) said that they stopped using cannabis due to cost.

A quarter of younger respondents (25%) compared to 4% of older respondents said they stopped because they did not enjoy the after effects.

Attitudes towards cannabis use (Table 29)

All those surveyed who had heard of cannabis were asked about their attitudes regarding cannabis use. The attitudes of this group were then compared with the attitudes of two mutually exclusive groups – those who said that they had used cannabis at some stage in their lives and those who said that they had never used cannabis.

In general, those who had ever used cannabis had more liberal views to the use of cannabis for both medical and recreational use and they felt that there was less risk to those who smoked cannabis on a regular basis.

Almost all (94%) of those who had ever used cannabis compared to three quarters (76%) of those who had never used cannabis, felt that cannabis use should be permitted for medical reasons. For both groups, males (96% and 78% respectively) were more likely to agree than females (91% and 74% respectively) and older respondents (97% and 78% respectively) were more likely to agree than younger respondents (93% and 73% respectively).

Two in three (63%) of those who had ever used cannabis compared to one in seven (14%) respondents who had never used cannabis, felt that cannabis use should be permitted for recreational reasons. For both groups, males (68% and 18% respectively) were more likely to agree than females (54% and 11% respectively) whilst younger respondents (63% and 16% respectively) were slightly more likely to agree than older respondents (63% and 13% respectively).

Respondents were also asked to rate their level of disapproval to the occasional use of cannabis – three quarters (75%) of respondents who had never used cannabis compared to one in five (20%) of those who had ever used cannabis, disapproved of people smoking cannabis occasionally. For both groups, females (77% and 26% respectively) were more likely to disapprove than males (72% and 17% respectively).

Risk perception (Table 29)

When asked about the risk involved in the use of drugs, three in five (61%) respondents who had never used cannabis compared to less than a quarter (23%) of respondents who had ever used cannabis felt that there was a great risk in smoking cannabis regularly.

Males and females who had never used cannabis were more than twice as likely (55% and 65% respectively) as males and females who have ever used cannabis (22% and 25% respectively) to perceive cannabis use as a 'great risk'. In general males were less likely to perceive cannabis use as a 'great risk' than females.

Both younger respondents (52%) and older respondents (66%) who had never used cannabis felt that there was a 'great risk' from regular cannabis use compared to the corresponding respondents (24% and 22% respectively) who had ever used cannabis.

Profile of cannabis users

Gender (Table 30)

The results of three chi-square tests were statistically significant, showing an association between gender and cannabis use. This indicates that males are more likely to use or have used cannabis than females.

Age (Table 31)

The results of the three chi-square tests were statistically significant. This indicates that there is an association between age and cannabis use. Younger people (15-34) are more likely to use or have used cannabis than older respondents (35-64).

Socio-Economic Group³ (Table 32)

The results of two of the chi-square tests were statistically significant. This indicates that there is an association between socio-economic group (SEG) and cannabis use for both lifetime and last month use. Respondents from SEG B (Middle Management, Senior Civil Servants, Managers and Owners of Businesses) had lower lifetime and last month prevalence rates than expected whereas respondents from SEG C1 (Junior management and owners of small businesses) and SEG C2 (Skilled manual workers and manual workers responsible for other workers) had higher lifetime prevalence rates than expected.

Work status (Table 33)

The result of one of the three chi-square tests was statistically significant. There is an association between work status and lifetime cannabis use, but not between work status and either recent or current cannabis use. Respondents who were in paid work had a higher prevalence rate than expected whereas respondents who were not in paid work had a lower prevalence rate than expected.

Housing tenure (Table 34)

The results of the three chi-square tests were statistically significant. This indicates that there is an association between housing tenure and cannabis use. Respondents who rented their property from a private landlord had higher prevalence rates than expected for lifetime, last year and last month use, whereas respondents who owned their home had lower prevalence rates than expected.

Education (Table 35)

The results of the three chi-square tests were statistically significant. This indicates that there is an association between levels of education and lifetime, recent and current drug use. Respondents who had educational qualifications had higher prevalence rates than expected for lifetime, last year and last month use, whereas respondents who had no qualifications had lower prevalence rates than expected.

3 See classification of Socio-Economic Groups on page 4.

Table 1: Ireland

Cannabis Prevalence Rates (%)					
	All adults 15-64 (4918)	Males (2470)	Females (2448)	Young adults 15-34 (2333)	Older adults 35-64 (2585)
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	17.4	22.4	12.3	24.0	11.4
Lifetime Prevalence (%)					
Last Year Prevalence (Recent use) (%)	5.0	7.2	2.9	8.6	1.8
Last Month Prevalence (Current use) (%)	2.6	3.4	1.7	4.3	0.9

All figures are based on weighted data.
All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.
All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 2: Ireland

Age of First Use and First Regular Use of Cannabis					
	All adults 15-64 (845)	Males (548)	Females (297)	Young adults 15-34 (555)	Older adults 35-64 (290)
Age first used cannabis (all users)					
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(845)	(548)	(297)	(555)	(290)
Mean age of first use	19	19	19	18	22
Median of age of first use ¹	18	18	18	17	20
Age first used cannabis (regular users)					
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(215)	(164)	(52)	(169)	(46)
Mean age of first regular use	17	17	17	16	18
Median of age of first regular use ¹	16	16	16	16	18
Age first regularly used cannabis (regular users)					
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(204)	(155)	(49)	(160)	(44)
Mean age of first regular use	18	18	18	18	20
Median of age of first regular use ¹	18	18	17	17	19
Average number of years between first use and first regular use of cannabis (regular users) ²					
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(201)	(153)	(48)	(158)	(43)
Average number of years	2	2	2	2	2

1. Median is used as a measure of central tendency to avoid extreme values skewing results.
2. Lag was calculated by measuring the time in years between when a respondent reported first using cannabis and first using cannabis regularly.

All figures are based on weighted data.
All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 3: Ireland

Frequency of Cannabis Use* (Current Users) (%)						
All adults 15-64		Males	Females	Young adults 15-34	Older adults 35-64	
Frequency of use (%)						
Total Weighted N (valid responses)		(125)	(84)	(41)	(24)	
20 days or more		22.2	27.4	11.3	22.5	20.7
10-19 days		14.0	10.4	21.5	14.9	10.2
4-9 days		22.3	19.9	27.1	23.0	19.0
1-3 days		40.7	41.3	40.0	38.5	50.1

* EMCDDA 'Handbook for Surveys on Drug Use Among the General Population' (Aug. 2002) defines frequency of drug use as:

20 days or more = daily or almost daily
10-19 days = several times a week
4-9 days = at least once a week
1-3 days = less than once a week

Based on responses of those who had used cannabis in the last 30 days.

All figures are based on weighted data.

All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.

All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 4: Ireland

Type of Cannabis Most Commonly Used (Current Users) (%)					
	All adults		Young adults		Older adults
	15-64	Males	Females	15-34	35-64
<i>Total Weighted N</i>					
	<i>(123)</i>	<i>(85)</i>	<i>(38)</i>	<i>(98)</i>	<i>(24)</i>
Hash	68.0	68.3	67.2	70.5	57.2
Grass	17.7	18.6	15.9	16.3	23.7
Resin	11.3	8.4	17.6	10.9	13.2
Weed	7.9	10.2	3.2	7.9	8.0
Herb	4.9	7.2	0.0	4.7	5.7
Skunk	3.0	4.4	0.0	1.4	9.6
Hash oil	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	1.2	1.7	0.0	1.5	0.0
Don't Know	3.4	3.9	2.0	1.4	11.3

This was a multi-choice question, therefore percentages will not total 100%.

Based on responses of those who had used cannabis in the last 30 days.

All figures are based on weighted data.

All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.

All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 5: Ireland

Method of Taking Cannabis (Current Users) (%)					
	All adults 15-64	Males	Females	Young adults 15-34	Older adults 35-64
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(123)	(85)	(38)	(98)	(24)
Joint	98.0	99.0	95.7	99.2	93.3
Pipe	7.0	7.3	6.4	7.2	3.9
Bong	5.8	5.5	6.4	6.2	3.9
Eat	3.4	2.8	4.9	3.5	3.4
Other	1.7	1.1	3.0	1.1	3.9
Don't Know	0.7	0.0	2.1	0.0	3.3

This was a multi-choice question, therefore percentages will not total 100%.

Based on responses of those who had used cannabis in the last 30 days.

All figures are based on weighted data.

All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.

All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 6: Ireland

How Cannabis was Obtained on Last Occasion* (Recent Users) (%)						
	All adults 15-64		Males	Females	Young adults 15-34	Older adults 35-64
	(215)	(155)	(60)	(174)	(42)	
<i>Total Weighted N (valid responses)</i>						
Given by family/friend	31.0	30.5	32.2	31.2	30.1	
Shared amongst friends	26.6	24.0	33.2	29.5	14.7	
Bought from a friend	20.2	23.8	11.1	17.3	32.4	
Bought from contact not known personally	16.0	15.2	17.9	15.6	17.7	
Given by stranger	3.0	2.5	4.4	3.2	2.4	
Given by contact not known personally	3.1	4.3	0.0	3.1	3.2	
Bought from a stranger	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.1	1.8	

* Based on responses of those who had used cannabis in the last 12 months.

All figures are based on weighted data.
All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.
All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 7: Ireland

Where Cannabis was Obtained on Last Occasion* (Recent Users) (%)				
	All adults		Young adults	Older adults
	15-64	Males Females	15-34	35-64
<i>Total Weighted N (valid responses)</i>				
House of a friend	(215)	(152)	(63)	(173)
Disco/bar/club	57.2	55.5	62.5	55.9
Street/Park	19.7	18.6	22.4	20.0
Ordered by phone	12.8	16.6	3.8	13.1
House of a dealer	7.4	8.1	5.6	7.6
Other	7.3	6.9	8.1	9.0
School/college	2.2	1.4	4.3	1.4
Office/workplace	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Don't Know	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	0.5	0.0	1.8	0.7

* Based on responses of those who had used cannabis in the last 12 months.

All figures are based on weighted data.
All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.
All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 8: Ireland

Ease of Obtaining Cannabis in a 24 Hour Period* (Recent Users) (%)					
	All adults 15-64	Males	Females	Young adults 15-34	Older adults 35-64
	(215)	(152)	(63)	(173)	(42)
Total Weighted N (valid responses)					
Very easy	44.7	48.9	34.6	46.4	37.4
Fairly easy	33.9	33.0	36.2	32.1	41.5
Neither easy or difficult	10.4	8.9	13.9	11.2	7.1
Fairly difficult	6.8	6.4	7.6	6.8	6.4
Very difficult	0.6	0.0	2.2	0.8	0.0
Don't Know	3.6	2.8	5.4	2.6	7.6

* Based on responses of those who had used cannabis in the last 12 months.

All figures are based on weighted data.
All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.
All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 9: Ireland

Regular Cannabis Users and Stopping Cannabis Use (%)					
	All adults			Young adults	Older adults
	15-64	Males	Females	15-34	35-64
Lifetime cannabis users who have ever used cannabis regularly*					
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(820)	(531)	(289)	(549)	(271)
	26.7	31.3	18.3	31.2	17.6
Regular cannabis users and stopping cannabis use					
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(219)	(166)	(53)	(171)	(48)
Regular user – Stopped taking	57.8	59.8	51.7	55.2	67.4
Regular user – Tried to stop but failed	11.9	11.0	14.4	13.0	7.9
Regular user – Never tried to stop	30.3	29.2	33.8	31.9	24.7

* As a percentage of lifetime cannabis users.

All figures are based on weighted data.

All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.

All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 10: Ireland

Reasons for Stopping Cannabis Use (Regular Users who have Stopped) (%)					
	All adults 15-64		Young adults 15-34		Older adults 35-64
<i>Total Weighted N (valid responses)</i>	(127)	(99)	(27)	(94)	(32)
Did not want to take any more	42.6	43.2	40.5	42.1	44.2
No longer part of social life	26.3	27.8	20.5	26.6	25.2
Did not enjoy after effects	22.9	23.2	19.3	24.2	19.1
Health concerns	19.9	22.0	12.5	21.4	15.7
Persuaded by friends/family	10.7	11.2	9.2	11.4	8.8
Cost/could no longer afford it	8.5	8.4	8.9	10.4	3.0
Impact on job/friends/family	7.7	9.9	0.0	9.3	3.1
Less available supply	4.5	5.8	0.0	1.3	13.9
Pregnancy	4.4	0.0	20.3	5.1	2.4
Pros did not outweigh cons	3.3	4.2	0.0	3.5	2.7
Rehab programme	1.7	1.0	4.1	1.2	3.1
Other	13.2	12.1	17.0	14.3	9.9
Don't Know	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

This was a multi-choice question, therefore percentages will not total 100%.

All figures are based on weighted data.

All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.

All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 11: Ireland

Attitudes towards Cannabis Use (%)														
GENERAL POPULATION							THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER USED CANNABIS							
All adults		Males		Females		Young adults	All adults		Males		Females		Young adults	Older adults
15-64		15-64		15-64		15-34	15-64		15-64		15-64		15-34	35-64
People should be permitted to take cannabis for medical reasons														
Total Weighted N		(4916)		(2469)		(2447)		(2333)		(2583)		(1757)		(2258)
(valid responses)														(294)
Fully agree		46.7		51.9		41.4		48.0		45.5		41.4		41.8
														75.4
Largely agree		25.5		24.2		26.9		24.1		26.9		25.8		27.8
														20.7
Neither agree or disagree		6.6		6.5		6.6		7.5		5.7		8.8		6.3
														1.5
Largely disagree		7.7		6.5		9.0		8.4		7.1		9.8		7.9
														0.9
Fully disagree		9.3		7.6		11.0		8.8		9.7		10.6		10.5
														0.9
Don't know		4.2		3.3		5.1		3.2		5.1		3.6		5.7
														0.6
People should be permitted to take cannabis for recreational reasons														
Total Weighted N		(4918)		(2470)		(2448)		(2333)		(2585)		(1757)		(2260)
(valid responses)														(294)
Fully agree		8.8		11.5		6.1		11.3		6.5		4.9		3.4
														30.5
Largely agree		12.4		15.1		9.7		14.6		10.1		10.3		7.5
														31.8
Neither agree or disagree		8.8		10.0		7.5		11.7		6.1		11.4		6.3
														5.1
Largely disagree		22.0		21.0		23.0		23.0		21.1		25.9		21.2
														20.0
Fully disagree		46.0		40.4		51.6		37.7		53.5		45.8		58.9
														11.1
Don't know		2.1		2.0		2.1		1.6		2.5		1.6		2.7
														1.4

Table 11: Ireland *continued*

Attitudes towards Cannabis Use (%)												
GENERAL POPULATION					THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER USED CANNABIS				THOSE WHO HAVE EVER USED CANNABIS			
All adults 15-64	Males	Females	Young adults 15-34	Older adults 35-64	All adults 15-64	Males	Females	Young adults 15-34	Older adults 35-64	All adults 15-64	Males	Older adults 35-64
People smoking cannabis occasionally												
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(4916)	(2469)	(2447)	(2333)	(2583)	(4016)	(1887)	(2126)	(1757)	(2257)	(854)	(553)
Do not disapprove	29.7	34.7	24.6	36.4	23.6	20.0	22.0	18.2	23.9	16.9	76.1	79.1
Disapprove	35.7	34.7	36.8	37.4	34.2	39.6	40.8	38.5	43.1	36.8	18.3	15.1
Strongly disapprove	33.1	29.2	37.0	25.0	40.4	38.9	35.9	41.6	31.9	44.4	4.5	4.6
Don't know	1.5	1.8	1.6	1.2	1.8	1.5	1.3	1.7	1.0	1.9	1.0	1.3
Perceived risk related to smoking cannabis regularly												
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(4914)	(2468)	(2446)	(2333)	(2581)	(4012)	(1887)	(2125)	(1757)	(2256)	(854)	(553)
No risk	1.7	3.4	1.4	3.7	1.6	1.4	1.5	1.3	1.8	1.0	8.4	10.2
Slight risk	12.8	15.9	9.6	16.1	9.7	9.3	11.1	7.7	12.0	7.2	29.5	32.6
Moderate risk	25.8	27.2	24.3	30.5	21.5	23.5	25.5	21.7	28.4	19.7	37.3	33.6
Great risk	57.2	51.5	62.9	48.5	65.0	63.8	59.4	67.9	56.4	69.6	24.5	23.3
Don't know	1.7	2.1	1.4	1.2	2.2	1.9	2.5	1.5	1.4	2.4	0.3	0.3

All figures are based on weighted data.
All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.
All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 12: Ireland

Cannabis Prevalence by Gender						
Cannabis use	LIFETIME PREVALENCE*		LAST YEAR PREVALENCE*		LAST MONTH PREVALENCE*	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(2470)	(2448)	(2470)	(2448)	(2470)	(2448)
No	77.6	87.7	92.8	97.1	96.6	98.3
Yes	22.4	12.3	7.2	2.9	3.4	1.7

* p <= 0.05.

All figures are based on weighted data
All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place
All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 13: Ireland

Cannabis Prevalence by Age Group						
Cannabis use	LIFETIME PREVALENCE*			LAST YEAR PREVALENCE*		
	15-34	35-64	Total	15-34	35-64	Total
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(2333)	(2585)	(4918)	(2333)	(2585)	(4918)
No	76.0	88.6	82.7	91.4	98.2	95.0
Yes	24.0	11.4	17.3	8.6	1.8	5.0

* p <= 0.05.

All figures are based on weighted data.
All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.
All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 14: Ireland

Cannabis Prevalence by Socio-Economic Group (SEG) (%)						
<i>Total Weighted N (valid responses)</i>						
	A	B	C1	C2	D	E TOTAL
	(174)	(767)	(1573)	(1147)	(842)	(4912)
Lifetime Prevalence by SEG*						
No	87.4	80.8	79.2	86.3	85.6	81.2
Yes	12.6	19.2	20.8	13.7	14.4	18.8
						17.3
Last Year Prevalence by SEG						
No	96.0	95.8	93.8	95.2	96.2	94.4
Yes	4.0	4.2	6.2	4.8	3.8	5.6
						5.0
Last Month Prevalence by SEG*						
No	97.7	97.7	96.6	98.1	98.3	96.6
Yes	2.3	2.3	3.4	1.9	1.7	3.4
						2.5

* p <= 0.05.

All figures are based on weighted data.

All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.

All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 15: Ireland

Cannabis Prevalence by Work Status (%)					
<i>Total Weighted N (valid responses)</i>					
	In paid work	Not in paid work	Student	Other	Total
	(3139)	(1090)	(657)	(24)	(4910)
Lifetime Prevalence by Work Status*					
No	80.6	88.1	83.3	87.0	82.6
Yes	19.4	11.9	16.7	13.0	17.4
Last Year Prevalence by Work Status*					
No	94.9	97.4	90.7	100.0	94.9
Yes	5.1	2.6	9.3	0.0	5.1
Last Month Prevalence by Work Status*					
No	97.5	98.3	95.7	100.0	97.4
Yes	2.5	1.7	4.3	0.0	2.6

* p <= 0.05.

All figures are based on weighted data.

All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.

All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 16: Ireland

Cannabis Prevalence by Housing Tenure (%)					
	Owned		Rented		Total
	in part or full	landlord	from private	LA/HA	
Total Weighted N (valid responses)					
	(3719)	(607)	(453)	(139)	(4918)
Lifetime Prevalence by Housing Tenure*					
No	85.3	67.4	80.2	86.2	82.7
Yes	14.7	32.6	19.8	13.8	17.3
Last Year Prevalence by Housing Tenure*					
No	96.3	87.3	93.4	97.1	95.0
Yes	3.7	12.7	6.6	2.9	5.0
Last Month Prevalence by Housing Tenure*					
No	98.3	92.4	97.1	98.6	97.5
Yes	1.7	7.6	2.9	1.4	2.5

* p <= 0.05.

LA/HA = Local Authority or Housing Association.

All figures are based on weighted data.

All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.

All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 17: Ireland

Cannabis Prevalence by Age Education Ceased (%)				
<i>Total Weighted N (valid responses)</i>	15 years and under		16-19	20 years & over
	(861)	(2051)	(1070)	(3982)
Lifetime Prevalence by Age Education Ceased*				
No	89.5	85.3	74.8	83.4
Yes	10.5	14.7	25.2	16.6
Last Year Prevalence by Age Education Ceased				
No	96.7	96.4	94.8	96.1
Yes	3.3	3.6	5.2	3.9
Last Month Prevalence by Age Education Ceased				
No	97.8	98.2	97.4	97.9
Yes	2.2	1.8	2.6	2.1

* p <= 0.05.

All figures are based on weighted data.

All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.

All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 18: Ireland

Cannabis Prevalence by Highest Education Level Attained (%)					
<i>Total Weighted N (valid responses)</i>	Elementary		Lower second level	Upper second level	Third level
	(456)	(1551)	(1361)	(1545)	(4913)
Lifetime Prevalence by Education level*					
No	94.7	86.1	83.7	74.6	82.6
Yes	5.3	13.9	16.3	25.4	17.4
Last Year Prevalence by Education level*					
No	97.6	95.2	94.9	94.0	94.9
Yes	2.4	4.8	5.1	6.0	5.1
Last Month Prevalence by Education level					
No	98.7	97.6	97.3	97.1	97.5
Yes	1.3	2.4	2.7	2.9	2.5

* p <= 0.05.

All figures are based on weighted data.

All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.

All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 19: Northern Ireland

Cannabis Prevalence Rates (%)					
	All adults 15-64 (3516)	Males 1739	Females (1777)	Young adults 15-34 (1550)	Older adults 35-64 (1966)
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	16.8	23.3	10.5	25.1	10.3
Lifetime Prevalence (%)					
Last Year Prevalence (Recent Use) (%)	5.4	8.7	2.2	9.8	2.0
Last Month Prevalence (Current Use) (%)	2.9	5.1	0.8	5.4	1.0

All figures are based on weighted data.
All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.
All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 20: Northern Ireland

Age of First Use and First Regular Use of Cannabis					
	All adults 15-64 (592)	Males 404	Females (187)	Young adults 15-34 (389)	Older adults 35-64 (203)
Age first used cannabis (all users)					
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(592)	(404)	(187)	(389)	(203)
Mean age of first use	20	20	20	18	24
Median of age of first use ¹	18	18	19	17	21
Age first used cannabis (regular users)					
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(165)	(133)	(32)	(135)	(30)
Mean age of first regular use	18	17	20	16	23
Median of age of first regular use ¹	16	16	17	16	20
Age first used cannabis regularly (regular users)					
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(152)	(122)	(29)	(124)	(27)
Mean age of first regular use	19	19	21	18	25
Median of age of first regular use ¹	18	18	19	18	23
Average number of years between first use and first regular use of cannabis (regular users) ²					
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(152)	(122)	(29)	(124)	(27)
Average number of years	2	2	1	2	2

1. Median is used as a measure of central tendency to avoid extreme values skewing results.
2. Lag was calculated by measuring the time in years between when a respondent reported first using cannabis and first using cannabis regularly.

All figures are based on weighted data.
All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 21: Northern Ireland

Frequency of Cannabis Use* (Current Users) (%)				
	All adults 15-64	Males 15-64	Females 15-64	Older adults 35-64
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(103)	(89)	(14)	(19)
20 days or more	30.5	32.8	15.7	29.8
10-19 days	20.3	20.0	22.6	21.1
4-9 days	20.9	20.5	23.8	23.1
1-3 days	28.2	26.7	37.9	26.0

* EMCDDA 'Handbook for Surveys on Drug Use Among the General Population' (Aug. 2002) defines frequency of drug use as:
20 days or more = daily or almost daily
10-19 days = several times a week
4-9 days = at least once a week
1-3 days = less than once a week.

Based on responses of those who had used cannabis in the last 30 days.

All figures are based on weighted data.
All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.
All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 22: Northern Ireland

Type of Cannabis Most Commonly Used (Current Users) (%)				
	All adults 15-64	Males 15-64	Females 15-64	Older adults 35-64
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(103)	(89)	(14)	(19)
Hash	27.9	29.8	15.3	27.7
Resin	46.6	49.9	25.1	48.6
Grass	14.5	12.2	28.9	15.2
Weed	10.3	9.6	15.0	12.7
Herb	7.0	6.6	9.9	4.6
Skunk	6.4	7.4	0.0	5.1
Hash oil	2.4	2.7	0.0	2.9
Other	3.2	1.2	15.7	2.6
Don't Know	0.8	0.9	0.0	0.0

This was a multi-choice question, therefore percentages will not total 100%.

Based on responses of those who had used cannabis in the last 30 days.

All figures are based on weighted data.
All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.
All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 23: Northern Ireland

Method of Taking Cannabis (Current Users) (%)				
	All adults 15-64	Males 15-64	Females 15-64	Older adults 35-64
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(103)	(89)	(14)	(19)
Joint	91.3	91.0	93.5	90.4
Pipe	11.8	12.1	9.9	11.9
Bong	13.3	13.8	9.9	16.3
Eat	2.2	0.0	16.4	1.6
Other	2.1	2.4	0.0	1.2
Don't Know	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

This was a multi-choice question, therefore percentages will not total 100%.

Based on responses of those who had used cannabis in the last 30 days.

All figures are based on weighted data.
All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.
All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 24: Northern Ireland

How Cannabis was Obtained on Last Occasion* (Recent Users) (%)					
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	All adults		Young adults		Older adults
	15-64	Males Females	15-34	15-34	35-64
Shared amongst friends	39.2	40.6	33.4	38.6	41.6
Bought from a friend	23.0	23.2	22.1	22.9	23.2
Given by family/friend	19.8	19.9	19.6	19.0	23.3
Bought from contact not known personally	6.7	7.1	5.0	7.0	5.5
Given by stranger	4.5	3.3	9.5	5.6	0.0
Bought from a stranger	3.3	2.7	5.9	4.1	0.0
Given by contact not known personally	3.4	3.2	4.4	2.7	6.4

* Based on responses of those who had used cannabis in last 12 months.

All figures are based on weighted data.

All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.

All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 25: Northern Ireland

Where Cannabis was Obtained on Last Occasion* (Recent Users) (%)					
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	All adults		Young adults		Older adults
	15-64	Males Females	15-34	15-34	35-64
House of a friend	55.0	51.9	67.5	53.1	62.5
Street/Park	12.4	13.9	6.5	13.9	6.3
Disco/bar/club	14.4	14.0	16.1	14.6	13.7
Ordered by phone	6.7	7.9	2.1	6.8	6.4
House of a dealer	4.8	5.1	3.4	5.9	0.0
Other	4.0	3.9	4.5	3.2	7.5
School/college	1.0	1.3	0.0	1.3	0.0
Office/workplace	0.6	0.8	0.0	0.0	3.3
Don't Know	1.0	1.3	0.0	1.3	0.0

* Based on responses of those who had used cannabis in last 12 months.

All figures are based on weighted data.

All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.

All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 26: Northern Ireland

Ease of Obtaining Cannabis in 24 Hour Period* (Recent Users) (%)					
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	All adults		Young adults		Older adults
	15-64	Males Females	15-34	15-34	35-64
Very easy	56.2	60.5	38.9	59.5	42.4
Fairly easy	34.7	31.7	47.1	31.7	47.6
Neither easy or difficult	5.0	5.1	4.5	4.3	7.9
Fairly difficult	1.8	1.3	3.7	2.2	0.0
Very difficult	1.0	0.7	2.0	0.7	2.1
Don't Know	1.3	0.7	3.7	1.6	0.0

* Based on responses of those who had used cannabis in the last 12 months.

All figures are based on weighted data.

All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.

All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 27: Northern Ireland

Regular Cannabis Users and Stopping Cannabis Use (%)					
	All adults 15-64	Males	Females	Young adults 15-34	Older adults 35-64
Lifetime cannabis users who have ever used cannabis regularly*					
<i>Total Weighted N (valid responses)</i>	(583)	(400)	(183)	(385)	(198)
	28.3	33.3	17.3	34.9	15.4
Regular cannabis users and stopping cannabis use					
<i>Total Weighted N (valid responses)</i>	(165)	(133)	(32)	(135)	(30)
Regular user – Stopped taking	47.6	44.5	60.7	45.5	57.2
Regular user – Tried to stop but failed	19.8	22.0	10.6	22.3	10.5
Regular user – Never tried to stop	32.5	33.4	28.7	32.6	32.3

* As a percentage of lifetime cannabis users.

All figures are based on weighted data.

All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.

All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 28: Northern Ireland

Reasons for Stopping Cannabis Use (Regular Users Who Have Stopped) (%)					
	All adults 15-64	Males	Females	Young adults 15-34	Older adults 35-64
<i>Total Weighted N (valid responses)</i>	(79)	(59)	(19)	(61)	(17)
Did not want to take any more	41.6	45.2	30.2	34.8	65.5
Health concerns	25.9	30.7	11.1	29.5	13.0
No longer part of social life	24.5	24.8	23.8	23.1	29.7
Did not enjoy after effects	20.2	17.2	29.6	24.7	4.3
Impact on job/friends/family	13.2	14.7	8.5	13.7	11.4
Cost/could no longer afford it	9.3	12.3	0.0	11.9	0.0
Pros did not outweigh cons	9.0	9.2	8.2	9.6	6.7
Persuaded by friends/family	6.5	7.3	3.9	7.0	4.7
Pregnancy	4.5	0.0	18.5	5.8	0.0
Rehab programme	1.0	0.0	4.2	1.3	0.0
Less available supply	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other	10.5	12.3	4.7	12.0	5.2
Don't Know	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

This was a multi-choice question, therefore percentages will not total 100%.

All figures are based on weighted data.

All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.

All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 29: Northern Ireland

Attitudes towards Cannabis Use (%)													
GENERAL POPULATION					THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER USED CANNABIS					THOSE WHO HAVE EVER USED CANNABIS			
All adults 15-64	Males Females	Young adults 15-34	Older adults 35-64	All adults 15-64	Males Females	Young adults 15-34	Older adults 35-64	All adults 15-64	Males Females	Young adults 15-34	Older adults 35-64	All adults 15-64	Young adults 15-34
People should be permitted to take cannabis for medical reasons													
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(3515)	(1738)	(1777)	(1550)	(1966)	(2891)	(1320)	(1571)	(1153)	(1738)	(592)	(404)	(187)
Fully agree	53.5	57.5	49.6	54.3	52.8	48.6	50.7	46.8	46.0	50.3	79.8	81.0	77.1
Largely agree	25.3	24.4	26.2	23.5	26.7	27.6	27.5	27.6	27.1	27.9	14.2	14.6	13.5
Neither agree or disagree	5.6	5.2	6.0	7.3	4.3	6.2	6.1	6.3	8.7	4.7	2.7	2.0	4.1
Largely disagree	6.2	5.3	7.2	5.8	6.6	7.3	6.6	7.8	7.3	7.3	1.0	1.0	0.8
Fully disagree	6.4	5.6	7.2	7.0	5.9	7.2	6.8	7.4	8.5	6.3	1.5	0.8	3.2
Don't know	2.9	2.0	3.9	2.0	3.6	3.2	2.2	4.0	2.5	3.6	0.8	0.5	1.3
People should be permitted to take cannabis for recreational reasons													
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(3515)	(1738)	(1777)	(1550)	(1966)	(2891)	(1320)	(1571)	(1153)	(1738)	(592)	(404)	(187)
Fully agree	10.3	14.4	6.3	14.1	7.3	5.1	6.4	4.0	6.7	4.1	36.0	40.8	25.5
Largely agree	12.1	14.9	9.3	13.7	10.7	9.0	11.4	7.0	9.3	8.8	27.4	26.8	28.6
Neither agree or disagree	9.6	9.7	9.5	12.4	7.4	9.1	9.5	8.8	12.2	7.0	12.7	10.6	17.0
Largely disagree	22.6	20.0	25.2	22.3	22.9	25.1	23.4	26.5	26.2	24.3	10.8	9.0	14.7
Fully disagree	43.6	39.3	47.8	35.9	49.6	49.9	47.6	51.8	43.8	54.0	12.1	11.5	13.4
Don't know	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.5	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.2	1.3	0.8

All figures are based on weighted data.
All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.
All figures are based on valid responses.

continued

All figures are based on weighted data.
All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.
All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 30: Northern Ireland

Cannabis Prevalence by Gender						
Cannabis use	LIFETIME PREVALENCE*		LAST YEAR PREVALENCE*		LAST MONTH PREVALENCE*	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(1739)	(1777)	(1739)	(1777)	(1739)	(1777)
No	76.8	89.5	91.3	97.7	94.9	99.2
Yes	23.2	10.5	8.7	2.3	5.1	0.8

* p <= 0.05.

All figures are based on weighted data.
All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.
All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 31: Northern Ireland

Cannabis Prevalence by Age Group						
Cannabis use	LIFETIME PREVALENCE*			LAST YEAR PREVALENCE*		
	15-34	35-64	Total	15-34	35-64	Total
Total Weighted N (valid responses)	(1550)	(1966)	(3516)	(1550)	(1966)	(3516)
No	74.9	89.7	83.2	90.3	98.0	94.6
Yes	25.1	10.3	16.8	9.7	2.0	5.4

* p <= 0.05.

All figures are based on weighted data.
All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.
All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 32: Northern Ireland

Cannabis Prevalence by Socio-Economic Group (SEG) (%)							
<i>Total Weighted N (valid responses)</i>							
	A	B	C1	C2	D	E	TOTAL
	(76)	(473)	(977)	(597)	(619)	(774)	(3516)
Lifetime Prevalence by SEG*							
No	81.3	86.7	81.6	80.7	83.8	84.6	83.2
Yes	18.7	13.3	18.4	19.3	16.2	15.4	16.8
Last Year Prevalence by SEG							
No	94.7	96.6	94.5	93.6	94.5	94.2	94.6
Yes	5.3	3.4	5.5	6.4	5.5	5.8	5.4
Last Month Prevalence by SEG*							
No	100.0	98.9	96.9	96.1	96.1	97.3	97.1
Yes	0.0	1.1	3.1	3.9	3.9	2.7	2.9

* p ≤ 0.05.

All figures are based on weighted data.

All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.

All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 33: Northern Ireland

Cannabis Prevalence by Work Status (%)					
<i>Total Weighted N (valid responses)</i>					
	In paid work	Not in paid work	Student	Other	Total
	(2040)	(1130)	(333)	(13)	(3516)
Lifetime Prevalence by Work Status*					
No	81.2	86.4	85.0	75.0	83.2
Yes	18.8	13.6	15.0	25.0	16.8
Last Year Prevalence by Work Status					
No	95.1	94.3	92.8	84.6	94.6
Yes	4.9	5.7	7.2	15.4	5.4
Last Month Prevalence by Work Status					
No	97.0	96.9	98.5	84.6	97.0
Yes	3.0	3.1	1.5	15.4	3.0

* p ≤ 0.05.

All figures are based on weighted data.

All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.

All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 34: Northern Ireland

Cannabis Prevalence by Housing Tenure (%)						
	Owned		Rented from private landlord		Other rented	
	(2448)	(275)	(752)	(19)	(6)	(3500)
Lifetime Prevalence by Housing Tenure*						
No	84.4	74.8	82.2	83.3	100.0	83.2
Yes	15.6	25.2	17.8	16.7	0.0	16.8
Last Year Prevalence by Housing Tenure*						
No	95.8	88.0	93.6	88.9	100.0	94.6
Yes	4.2	12.0	6.4	11.1	0.0	5.4
Last Month Prevalence by Housing Tenure*						
No	98.0	93.1	95.9	100.0	100.0	97.1
Yes	2.0	6.9	4.1	0.0	0.0	2.9

* p ≤ 0.05.

All figures are based on weighted data.
All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.
All figures are based on valid responses.

Table 35: Northern Ireland

Cannabis Prevalence by Education Qualification (%)				
	Qualifications	No Qualifications	Total	
<hr/>				
Total Weighted N (valid responses)		(2367)	(1145)	(3512)
<hr/>				
Lifetime Prevalence by Education Level*				
No	79.4	91.2	83.2	
Yes	20.6	8.8	16.8	
<hr/>				
Last Year Prevalence by Education Level*				
No	93.5	96.9	94.6	
Yes	6.5	3.1	5.4	
<hr/>				
Last Month Prevalence by Education Level*				
No	96.4	98.4	97.1	
Yes	3.6	1.6	2.9	
<hr/>				

* p ≤ 0.05.

All figures are based on weighted data.
All figures are rounded to the nearest decimal place.
All figures are based on valid responses.

Notes

Notes

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Research Advisory Group and Editorial Board:

Mr Hugh Kerr (since June 2004), Mr Brian McWilliams (since October 2004), Mr Kieron Moore (DAIRU), Dr Des Corrigan, Ms Mairéad Lyons, Dr Aileen O’Gorman, Dr Hamish Sinclair (NACD).

Contact NACD:

Mairéad Lyons
National Advisory Committee on Drugs
3rd Floor
Shelbourne House
Shelbourne Road
Ballsbridge
Dublin 4

Tel: 00 353 1 667 0760
Email: info@nacd.ie
Web: www.nacd.ie

Contact DAIRU:

Kieron Moore
Drug and Alcohol Information
and Research Unit
Annex 2
Castle Buildings
Stormont
Belfast
BT4 3SQ

Tel: 00 44 28 90 522501
Email: dairu@dhsspsni.gov.uk
Web: www.dhsspsni.gov.uk



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